

Coming Out to Myself by GallifreyGod

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Angst, Bullying, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, Gen, Homophobic Language, Partially OOC, happy endings

Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, James (Stranger Things), Jane "Eleven" Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Principal Coleman, Troy (Stranger Things), Will Byers

Relationships: Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper, Will Byers & Jim "Chief" Hopper (fatherly)

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-12-24

Updated: 2017-12-24

Packaged: 2022-04-03 15:01:35

Rating: Mature

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 3,127

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

From the day he found the word in the dictionary to the day he told his parents, Will Byers constantly thought about the one thing that he always felt strayed him even further from the rest.

M FOR HEAVY LANGUAGE

Coming Out to Myself

Author's Note:

Alright, I'm gonna set some ground rules for this fic.

1. DO NOT comment anything hateful, disrespectful, rude, or unnecessary. I'm not here to listen, I'm here to write. Click away now if you have a problem with LGBT+ Comment Moderation is on for a reason.

2. DO NOT come for me about this as "sexualization" alright? Because assuming someone is straight is just as sexualizing as presuming someone is gay. They're both a sexual orientation.

3. Will is 15/16 by the end of this. A lot of people in the LGBT+ like myself know about their orientation longgg before that but to keep the assholes away, I've decided to end it at 15/16.

4. DO NOT share this if you're going to write something rude with any sort of repost. I don't care if you share it somewhere like Tumblr because you'll probably see this on my own Tumblr account but I don't want any type of rude statement associated with this.

5. I'm not filtering this. So, if you have a problem with the reality of what its like to grow up LGBT+ then click away because this is rated M for heavy language

6. DO NOT come for me and say that Will isn't gay because you nor I know that for sure. This is a FANFICTION k? Let's remember that

honest to God, I wouldn't even put warnings on this but apparently, we live in a day and age where LGBT+ is still a hot-button issue. If you cant accept LGBT

+ then get off my page. I just don't have the cojones to post without the warning.

Alright, if you're still here, I hope you enjoy reading this because I put a lot of my own experience into this. Get ready for some tears.

It's been on his mind for as long as he could remember, always lurking in the back of his thoughts. It felt like a curse, even when it wasn't. He knew it wasn't, at least not to him. Other people had said so many things when he was trapped in the Upside Down. The party always tried to keep the harsh things said about him private, but he knew who said what. He knew what Troy and James said about him. He knew what the parents were saying. Hell, he knew what his own father had said about him.

Will had always known. Growing up with three guy friends who began developing crushes on girls at young ages, it was almost as clear as day to him. There had never been a word for it in his mind other than 'different' and maybe that's why he struggled with the idea of being a 'freak.'

Until the day he was flipping through a dictionary, studying for a spelling test. The word was right there, bold in black and white right on the page.

"Gay"

Will felt his chest heave with both fear and relief. If there was a word for it, then it must have been a common thing, right? What would other people think though? Obviously, if he had never heard the word in such a small town like Hawkins, then it wasn't *that* common. Every time he thought back to that moment, it felt like the tears were still wet on his cheeks. He liked boys... and he didn't know why it had to be so painful.

Growing up, he heard the word more and more... and never in a good tone. The first time he heard the word in a derogatory manner was when Lonnie called him a 'fag.' His parents were arguing over something stupid in the next room when he heard his father spit the word out like poison in his mouth.

"The kid is just a fucking fag anyway."

He hadn't heard his mother's response because she had punched him in the chest as a reply. Will didn't know if it was because she was mad at Lonnie or upset with the idea of her son being gay. When he had first heard the argument, he didn't understand at all. He asked Jonathan what the word meant, his brother replied simply. "It's a really mean word for someone who is gay." That's when he replayed it in his head, putting the pieces together properly.

Jonathan's response made him feel better because his older brother hadn't shown any hate towards someone being gay. Rather than him saying something terrible about being gay, he had almost defended it.

When word had gotten out about Will's disappearance, the locals had said things like *"Someone probably killed him for being a faggot."* Jonathan had always told him that words hurt, but nothing compared to finding out what was said about him. He knew the stares he got when he returned were because he was presumed dead, but it felt like they were because people had called him those horrendous words.

He wanted to wait to tell his family, maybe all of this would go away. It seemed like the more he tried to wait, the more people pushed it on him. Kids were growing up with him and so were the phrases. He ignored it as best he could as a proper front, but when he closed his eyes at night he heard those words in his memories.

Then came the Snow-Ball. As soon as he walked in, Will had forgotten why he even wanted to come in the first place. Maybe it was because he craved normality. I mean, not every kid was sucked into a parallel dimension and then possessed by a fictional character. School dances were supposed to be normal, but he wasn't a normal kid.

When Darcy Miller asked him to dance, he felt frozen in his footsteps. The look that his friends had given him only confused more. Why wouldn't he want to dance with her? She was popular and pretty, but it just never felt right. Will could hear himself praying for the song to end early so he could run away. This didn't feel normal!

Reaching 9th grade was a living hell... scratch that, *almost* like a living hell. He had seen hell, and it was a lot colder than he thought it would be. Kids were becoming teenagers and teenagers were assholes, as Jonathan put lightly. Will never liked to talk about what was said in school, until Principle Coleman had caught wind of the situation.

The principal had been walking through the hall when he saw Troy and James shoving Will against his locker. The two bullies had been taunting Will with homophobic slurs while other kids watched.

Principle Coleman had called Will to his office after the ordeal to try to figure out the best route to handle this. He had a duty to both protect other students from bullying and end the streak of teasing that was haunting over Hawkins High.

"It was nothing, alright? It happens and I'm used to it." Will pleaded helplessly with the principle. The teen was nervously fidgeting in the chair opposite from the teacher.

"Will, I understand it isn't easy to talk about this but I have a duty of care for not only you but the other students who they might be bullying. You need to report this to me or your teachers when this happens. " Coleman tried to sympathize but Will just wanted to leave.

He sat in the chair, looking down at his hands. He felt defeated more than anything, embarrassment clouding his mind.

"Do your parents know?" Principle Coleman asked quietly. No, his mom and step-dad knew about none of it. Having Chief Hopper as his stepfather wasn't exactly the easiest when he knew the other kids would call him a 'snitch' if he told.

"Know what?" Will asked tiredly. he knew what the principal was asking him but he just wanted to crawl into a hole and stay there.

"Will, you know what I'm talking about. Do they know?" Coleman

asked with a soft expression.

Will huffed under his breath, frustrated with being under pressure. "No, they don't. I'm not telling them either," he said adamantly enough to hopefully get his point across.

"There are support groups for teens like you, Will." Principal Coleman had barely finished speaking when Will flared back.

"Oh, so there are support groups for gay teens who have been abducted by illegal science labs? I'll make sure to look it up." he didn't like when his anger came out, but this time he couldn't help it. He also knew that he couldn't tell Coleman the whole story of the Upside Down but his point got across well enough.

"Just... please don't tell my parents." Will pleaded, searching for some sort of remorse in Coleman's face.

"I'm gonna send you home today, give you some time to cool down. If it happens again, I'm obligated to report it to Chief Hopper and then I'll have no choice. So I suggest you tell them. Go collect your things while I call home." Coleman sent him off while he dialed the phone to call Hopper.

When Will walked outside, Hopper was leaning against his blazer with a small but empathetic expression. "Hey, kid." Hop greeted quietly as he opened the door for his son.

The first half of the car ride was a silent one, the air felt like it was filled with awkward emptiness. Hopper was the first to speak up.

"If you want to talk, I'm here to listen without judgment. All Principal Coleman told me was that a few kids were picking on you. I can't do anything about it as police until you give me the thumbs up but I'm here if you need me, kid." Hopper's words were quiet but they were calming to Will.

"Thanks, I appreciate it. I'm fine though." Will replied as he looked out the window at the passing trees. It was days like this he was grateful that Hopper had come into his family's life. He was a hell of a lot nicer than Lonnie.

"Of course." Hop got the gist that Will wasn't ready to speak up yet. The father in him wanted to go and kick those little fucker's asses but he knew that Will needed time to cope with whatever was going on.

When the blazer pulled into the driveway, Will jumped out, running into the house. He quickly shut himself in his room to do homework.

Hopper had called Joyce right after his phone call with Principal Coleman. Of course, Joyce had immediately left work and rushed home. Hopper was sitting at the kitchen table with a cigarette when his wife walked in.

"What the hell happened?" she asked quietly, trying not to let her volume upset Will further.

"Beats me. Principal Coleman only told me that a couple kids were picking on him. I told Will that when he's ready to talk that we're here but he doesn't seem to want to speak up." Hop replied, passing her a cigarette.

"I want to press charges on those little jackasses!" Joyce fumed as she took a drag off of her cigarette.

"We can't, not until I can get the whole story." he sighed. He wished there was something more he could do, seeing his family in pain wrecked his heart.

"Should we talk to him?" she asked, frowning at the tight pain in her chest. She thought the bullying had calmed down by now! Nobody seemed to be calling him 'zombie boy' anymore. So why was it starting up now?

"If that's what you want to do, but I think we should let him come to us," Hop answered, rubbing her back before she leaned into him.

"I think I have an idea of what to do," Joyce whispered as she looked at her watch. "It's noon, I think we'll have just enough time."

Will didn't want to go to them. Not like this, not when he was lying in bed crying. He couldn't make out any of the words his parents were saying from the kitchen and he wasn't even trying. He wanted Jonathan to come home from New York, even if it was just for a few minutes. He just wanted to talk to his older brother more than anything. It didn't have to be about the bullying or anything, he just needed to hear his voice.

He knew he could talk to Jane too, she gave him the same feeling of having a shoulder to cry on as Jonathan gave him. But she was at school, not having to deal with nearly as many problems as he did. Her life seemed to be just bitchin' lately. He hated that he envied her for that, it made him feel guilty. At least he could count on her to make Troy and James piss themselves the next day, that helped a little.

Will woke up to the sound of his mother knocking on his door. He didn't realize he had dozed off for a few hours while lying in bed. It was already seven at night when he was woken.

"Come in," he said quietly as he sat up, rubbing his eyes. Joyce was wearing the soft calming smile that she always did when he was upset.

"Hey honey," she whispered, carrying in a plate of his favorite dinner of pork chops with cheese rice. Joyce sat down next to him on his bed as he propped himself up to eat.

"Thanks, Mom." Will smiled shyly as he picked up his fork and started to take a few bites.

"I have a present that I think might cheer you up," Joyce said with the same grin she gave him when she bought Poltergeist tickets.

"Mom, I'm fine. I promise." Will tried to dismiss it but she simply

moved a bit of hair out of his face.

"Are you sure you don't wanna see what it is?" She smiled proudly as she saw a small grin crack on his face. "Okay."

Before she said another word, Hopper opened his door slowly.

"Hey, buddy." There he was. The one person he wanted the most.

"Jonathan!" Will cried as he shot out of bed and ran to his brother. Nearly knocking him over, Will wrapped his arms around him and hugged him tightly. "How did you get here?" he asked, nearly tearing up at the sight.

"Mom and Dad called me and said you had a rough day. I caught the first flight out from New York when I heard." Jonathan said as he ruffled Will's hair. Joyce and Hopper left the two brothers to catch up.

"Yeah, I'm okay though." Will lied as his smile loosened up.

"Hey, we don't have to talk about it if you don't want to. I brought you a new mixtape." Jonathan smiled as he held up the cassette in between his fingers. Jonathan was like a remedy for any bad day now. Even if it was just a phone call, Will's appreciation for his older brother increased ten fold when he realized he wouldn't be around anymore.

"It's just, Troy and James were calling me names and shoving me against my locker. Principal Coleman saw it happen and he sent me home," he said as he sat back down in bed while Jonathan sat down at the other end.

"What did they call you?" Jonathan asked quietly while Will stared down at his hands, fidgeting with the trim of his blanket.

"Will?" he asked, leaning forward to look at his brother closer.

Will bit his lip nervously "They uh... they called me a faggot, queer, homo, and other things I'm really not comfortable repeating." he could see the hurt on his older brother's face as he opened up to him.

"Oh my God," Jonathan said before taking a deep breath. "I am so sorry, Will." the pain in his little brother's eyes crushed him beyond measures.

"I wish I could say it's fine but it's not." Will felt himself choking up at the hurt in his own words.

"You're right, it isn't. But can I ask you something?" Jonathan raised his eyebrows with his question as Will nodded.

"How long have you been waiting to come out?" he asked sincerely, watching Will's look of confusion.

"How did you kn-"

"I've always known. You came to me when you were nine and asked me what 'fag' meant. I saw the look in your eyes when I explained it and I just knew." Jonathan said as he patted Will's hand.

"And you don't hate me?" he asked nervously, his voice crackling with fear in each word.

"Will, you're my little brother. I would always love you whether you're gay, straight, or bi. It's not a bad thing." Jonathan gave him a soft and hopeful smile as he teared up. He could see the relief in his brother's eyes as a fifty-ton weight lifted off his chest.

"Mom and Dad won't hate me, will they?" he asked nervously as he sniffled.

"Not even a little bit, I'm sure of it. Whenever you're ready to tell them, they will be here to listen." Jonathan replied as he pulled Will in a tight hug.

"Should I tell them while you're here?" Will felt butterflies build up in his stomach as he thought about it.

"Only if you're ready. I'll be right there the whole time." Jonathan smiled as he patted his brother's shoulder. Will took a deep breath and nodded. "Alright, I'll go get them together." he smiled as he ruffled his hand in Will's hair.

As Jonathan made his way into the living room, Joyce and Hopper stood up nervously. "Did he talk to you?"

"Yeah, we're gonna have a little family meeting," he replied to his mother.

As Hop called Jane to the living room, Jonathan went back and retrieved Will. The teenager looked nervous as hell as he walked out into the living room, four faces staring at him intently.

As Will stood in front of them, Jonathan smiled and nodded from the couch seating the four of them.

"Um." Will started with an audible gulp. "It's taken me quite a bit of time to build up the confidence to say this but..." It felt like the lump in his throat was never going to go away.

"Uh...I'm gay. I was so afraid to say it, but I've known for a very long time. I was scared that everybody would hate me and treat me differently but they already are. I don't care as much about the kids at school because who cares but I was afraid *you'd* hate me and that you'd kick me out and-" his babbling was cut off from the calm voice of his mother.

"Will, it's okay." Joyce smiled.

"You... you don't hate me?" Will asked nervously and completely out of breath.

"Of course not, you're our son. We're here to love and care for you, not ever hate you." Hopper replied with a heartfelt grin while the rest of them nodded in agreement.

"Troy and James shoved me against my locker and called me things like a 'fag'. That's why Principal Coleman sent me home today." he admitted while his face grew grim.

"Come here." Joyce motioned for him to come closer. He stood in front of her, looking down as she stayed seated on the couch.

"Do not listen to what those kids have to say, alright? You are my wonderful, intelligent, and clever boy. Those assholes have nothing

on you, Will the Wise." Joyce smiled as Will choked out a laugh through his tears.

"I'll make them pee themselves next time they say something," Jane said with a smile as the rest of them laughed.

"Feel free to flip 'em the bird too. I'll bail you out." Hop added with a chuckle.

It was safe to say, that night ended with a group hug.

The next day, he walked into school with his head proudly held high. A smile stayed lit up on his face as he walked with Mike, Lucas, Dustin, Max, and Jane, none of them leaving his side. Nothing was gonna kick him down anymore. He was so loved by so many, the bullies didn't matter. His family and friends all loved him, and they all admired him even more now that he had the courage to be himself.

And that is the story of how Will Byers not only came out to his loved ones, but he came out to himself too.

Author's Note:

Remember what I said about commenting. If it's not nice, it's not coming on this thread so don't even try.